

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee
Minutes for May 21, 2003
Third Wednesday of the Month

Members present: Art Albrecht, Richard Baugh, Jim Huffman, Rudy Propst, Deb Stevens, Dorn Peterson, Carl Wassum, and David Wiens.

Members absent: Kathy Sarver, Reg Foucar-Szocki, Les Bolt, Greg Coffman, Joe Fitzgerald, Shelley Baker, and Robert Steere.

Staff / consultants present: Phoebe Kilby, Sympoetica, Stacy Turner, Director of Planning and Community Development; and Earl W. Anderson, Senior Planner.

Chairman Huffman called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Ms. Kilby introduced the vision and goals, discussed what they were used for, and how she had formulated them. She stated that the committee should, when thinking of the vision and goal, look at fitting them into the big picture, talk about how they work with the more broader and loftier ideas. Goals are broad statements that want to achieve the big picture. This is different from the objectives that will fall under the goals and they are different from the strategies that will fall under the objectives. The strategies are what will be used on a day-to-day basis, not the vision and goals. She then began to go over the vision statement:

The City of Harrisonburg – an engaged community, where citizens work together to create a great place to live, to raise a family, to learn, to work and to prosper.

Mr. Peterson questioned the “engaged community section.

Ms. Kilby stated that her explanation for that would be inspiring the community and that the government is not controlled solely by the politicians, but by the community. It is a statement that keeps the community involved and not let them become apathetic. The statement also, gets at the heart of involving citizens in activities.

The committee discussed the statement more and decided to change the vision statement to the following:

The City of Harrisonburg – where citizens are inspired to work together to create a great place to live, to raise a family, to learn, to work and to prosper.

Mr. Wiens asked about the text that followed the vision statement. Would that be discussed tonight?

Ms. Kilby stated that the text was not meant for review tonight, but as further explanation of the vision statement. The text will be reviewed as the document progresses as a whole, rather than just as a piece now. She then began discussing the goals and that just because they are numbered, really does not give them a specific ranking. This may be something the committee thinks about because people generally assume that the higher on the list the item is then the more important it is.

Mr. Peterson stated that he liked how Lynchburg had created their document. They did have a list, however, in the back they had a ranking of the goals and objectives, by what they wanted to accomplish within certain a time. Some were three years for completion and others were out further than that.

The committee then began discussing the goals and made the following addition (*in italic*) or deletions (~~striketrough~~):

Goal 1. To strengthen existing neighborhoods and promote the development of new neighborhoods that are quiet, safe, beautiful, walkable, enhance *social* ~~civic~~ interaction, and offer a balanced range of housing choices.

Ms. Kilby stated that the focus here was on the balancing of the existing neighborhoods and with new neighborhoods.

Goal 2. To ensure that every citizen has access to a decent, affordable home.

Ms. Kilby stated that this was a requirement now with the new State Code change and that the primary issues here were on the structure and not the neighborhood.

Goal 3. To promote *novel* ~~new~~ patterns of development like those developed early in the city's history – vital, well planned and well integrated mixed-housing and mixed-use urban areas of distinct character.

Chairman Huffman stated that to make sure the plan stayed an open document he would like to promote that novel development be allowed to come forward from the community. If they are good ideas, the plan should not hamper their development.

Goal 4. To provide a wide and equitably distributed range of educational and cultural opportunities for all ages.

Ms. Kilby stated that this would cover anything related to “schools”. She used equitable to mean evenly distributed in a multifaceted way throughout the community.

Goal 5. To celebrate the city's heritage and preserve and protect its historic resources as essential elements of the city's economic health, aesthetic character, and sense of place.

Ms. Kilby stated that she wanted “celebrating” to mean that not only should the government sponsor events and programs, but also the citizens should themselves want these things publicized.

Goal 6. To preserve and *enhance* ~~protect~~ the city's natural resources and *encourage development that is compatible with nature* ~~bring nature back into the city~~.

Ms. Kilby stated that by bringing nature back into the City, the plan would bring nature to people's attention through the Greenway, common green areas of subdivisions, etc.

Goal 7. To ~~enhance the quality of life and~~ meet the recreation needs of every citizen by providing comprehensive leisure opportunities and developing and maintaining a safe, well-distributed park and recreation system.

Ms. Kilby stated that this goal was taken from the Department of Parks and Recreation's master plan.

Goal 8. To develop a safe and convenient transportation system serving all modes of travel *such as, automobile* ~~vehicular~~, pedestrian, bicycle and transit.

Goal 9. To support a vital city with community facilities, infrastructure and services that are efficient, cost-effective and conserving of resources.

Ms. Kilby stated that the intention of this goal was to substantiate the underpinnings of the City's services (water, sewer, trash, etc.).

Goal 10. To ensure the public safety and *encourage the provision of* ~~provide~~ excellent health services *for all people*.

Ms. Steven stated that she thought there might be a problem with people seeing the meaning of "provide" as the City stating that it will give monetary sums to health services.

Mr. Wiens stated that he thought this should be expanded to include all people.

Goal 11. To retain and enhance the city's role as the economic and tourism hub of the region offering a *variety* ~~wealth~~ of jobs and a stable economic base.

Mr. Albrecht stated that he would prefer to not include wealth as an economic goal, but that the City should promote more variety than the poultry and retail industries.

Goal 12. To improve the quality *and compatibility* of development ~~and the maintenance of property~~.

Ms. Kilby stated that the focus of this goal was trying to kill two birds with one stone. The first is creating good quality new development and the second was looking toward neighborhood revitalization.

Chairman Huffman stated that he really thought those two should be separate, because they wanted to definitely control new development. In addition, to that the need to look at the City's older areas and begin making strides in their revitalization as important neighborhoods in the City.

Mr. Albrecht stated that he agreed to improving the neighborhoods, but the City also has to look at the commercial areas and how maintenance of those properties is kept.

The Committee agreed to separating the two ideas and added in the new goal as 13 and moved the rest down.

Goal 13. To enhance and revitalize existing residential and commercial areas.

Goal 14 ~~13~~. To coordinate and collaborate with Rockingham County, Rockingham Memorial Hospital, James Madison University, Eastern Mennonite University and others to meet these goals.

Mr. Peterson asked if this goal should be higher in the list.

Ms. Kilby stated that it was heard a lot in the community input meetings and from the CPAC. However, the numbering in the goals will only mean something if the Committee wants it to be that way.

Goal 15 ~~14~~. To keep this plan vital and useful by regularly reviewing its recommendations and the progress toward meeting them.

Goal 16 ~~15~~. To engage all citizens to work collaboratively in planning, ~~and~~ developing, *and promoting* the city as a great place.

Ms. Kilby stated that the two above goals were to make sure the City looked at the plan frequently and not wait until the five year review to update and that the citizens need to be kept in the loop. They are the people the document really serves, so it needs to stay important to them.

The next meeting of the CPAC will be on June 18, 2003 for generating objectives for each of the goals that were set for the plan.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.